Notices of Books.

A New Universal Etymological, Technological, and Pronouncing Dictionary of the English Language, embracing all the Terms used in Arts, Science, and Literature. In 2 vols. By JOHN CRAIG, Esq. F.G.S. London: George Routledge and Co. Farringdon-street. 1852.

THE publication of a General Dictionary which should embrace the additions made to our language by the progress of literature and science, with a correction of existing discrepancies, up to the present time, has long been a desideratum. This is now supplied by Mr. John Craig, F.G.S. Lecturer on Geology in Anderson's University, Glasgow, with very great success. As the author remarks, independently of the advantage which this work has over others in price—

"One of them does not give the derivation of the words, another does not give the pronunciation. In the Universal Dictionary, both the etymology and the pronunciation of the words are given. It also possesses the advantage of containing a vast mass of important information connected with natural history and science, not to be found in any other. Another feature which distinguishes it, is the illustrating of terms which have become obsolete, by quotations from old standard authors, whereby the works of these authors can be more fully understood and appreciated. The names of persons and of places have been purposely excluded, because it was impossible to embrace biography and geography without either rendering the work too large and expensive to be accessible to the great mass of readers, or so abridging the other definitions as to destroy the completeness and utility of the publication."

The work presents a copious, if not a complete, Dictionary of Law Terms and Phrases, as defined by the highest law authorities.—All the terms used in Medical Science, in this and the other countries of Europe, are explained.—In Botany, it embraces all the genera in Don's great work and Loudon's Encyclopædia; and the orders, as given by Lindley, in his "Vegetable Kingdom," are fully described. As a Dictionary of Mechanics and Commerce, it will be found eminently useful to the intelligent operative, the engineer, clerk, or shopkeeper. In Zoology, all the classes, orders, and genera, given by Cuvier, Swainson, Gray, and others; and in Geology, Conchology, Ichthyology, and Mammalogy, describing all the terms there employed. In its orthoepy it seems to us it is weakest. There is merely a transcript under the head of "Key to the Pronunciation and the Vowel Sounds, with their French Equivalents" of "A Table of the Simple and Diphthongal Vowels," as used by Walker, which in that author is repeated at the head of each page, with figured references, offering great assistance to the student; but as to its application here, there is, in no shape, any allusion made, nor do we think, had there been, it would have offered any key to the rendering, for example, of the three words, "amateur," "connoisseur," and "restaurateur;" the first described by Mr. Craig, "*a-ma-tare!*" the other as "*ko-ne-seur!*" and the last as "*res-taw-ra-ture.*" We call the attention of the author to this point for future consideration.

It is a very useful habit for members of a family to fall into to call for the "dictionary," when there is any doubt expressed as to the meaning of a word, its spelling, derivation, or so forth. There should be no family without one, and this is just the work they should obtain. It is dedicated to Charles Knight and Robert Chambers.

Collectanea Antiqua; Vol. II. Part IX. Etchings of Ancient Remains, Illustrative of the Habits, Customs, and History of past Ages. By C. Roach Smith, F.S.A. &c. J. Russell Smith, Sobo-square. 1852.

THIS part concludes the second volume of Mr. Roach Smith's interesting collections illustrative of past times. It shows what would surprise some of our lady friends, examples of pendant girdle ornaments, very analogous to the modern absurdity, invented to tempt pickpockets, called a *chatelaine*. In the preface the writer reproaches the city authorities for not purchasing Mr. John Newman's collection of antiquities found in London. Concerning the recent investigation as to the state of the royal monuments in Westminster Abbey, he says,—

"At a recent meeting of the Society of Antiquaries it was stated that a member of an architectural society was striving to induce his colleagues to petition the Government to consider the ruinous and neglected state of the royal tombs in Westminster Abbey. The announcement excited very little attention or sympathy. Indeed, it seems that none of the numerous antiquarian, archæological, and architectural societies have co-operated to remonstrate against the disgraceful state of the tombs in question; neither have they evinced the slightest interest in the matter. But were they consistently active, zealous, and united, it does not appear why the monuments in Westminster Abbey should be singled out for the special protection of Parliament, when so many of various classes and of different epochs, having equal claims to consideration, are even much more exposed to decay and Vandalism. A Parliamentary investigation of the whole of our ancient national monuments is required, not a partial protection, extorted for some which happen to be more conspicuous, and therefore more fashionably popular than others."

Cyclopædia of Useful Arts—Mechanical and Chemical—Manufactures, Mining, and Engineering. Edited by CHARLES TOMLINSON. Illustrated by several hundred Engravings. George Virtue, London and New York. Parts 8 to 12 inclusive.

OF this work we have more than once had occasion to speak. We are glad to see it continue to sustain the good opinion we have had of it. Among the subjects more likely to interest our professional readers in the parts now under notice will be found casting and founding, chimney, coal, copper, couplings, cranes, drainage, dredging, drilling, elasticity, &c.

Miscellanea.

PROFITS OF GAS AT MANCHESTER.—At a recent meeting of the gas committee of the corporation who themselves supply the town with gas, it was stated that notwithstanding the reduction in the price, the profits have gradually increased, and during the past year they amounted to no less than 37,399*l.* Within the last seven years the production of gas has increased from 305,000,000 to 510,000,000 cubic feet per annum. As to the position of Manchester with respect to advantages in the manufacture of gas, Alderman Shuttleworth said that "as some remarks had been made about the price of gas, it was desirable the public should know that Manchester stood not in a good position, but in the very worst position in England, for having gas cheap, with regard to the value of the material. This would be evident on comparing it with some other places. There was one place in which 11s. was paid for cannel, and the coke sold at 4s. 6d. leaving the charge for the material of the gas 6s. 6d. a ton. London paid 13s. for its cannel, and the coke was sold at 11s. and therefore the cost of the material for gas was only 2s. a ton. Another town paid 6s. 3d. for cannel and sold the coke at 4s. 6d. In another place the coal was bought at only 4s. and the coke sold at 2s. 6d. Now what was the case in Manchester? Manchester paid a price which might be put down at 12s. 6d. for the cannel, though, during the last two years, a price 2s. higher was sometimes paid; and the coke was sold at 2s. 9d. The gas was, therefore, subject to a charge of 9s. 9d. for its material, which was no less than 7s. 9d. a ton higher than London paid."

STEAM PLOUGH.—The following account of a steam plough, described in the *New York Courier*, places all others in the distance. It is the invention of a native of Cromarty, in Scotland:—"Mr. Alexander T. Watson has devised a locomotive steam ploughing machine, which, if the operator desires, will also do the work of sowing and harrowing at the same time. The model exhibited by him, at 38, Wall-street, is constructed to drive twelve ploughs, and in land suited to its operators a single machine will work over from 30 to 40 acres a day."

WHY IS FIRE INSURANCE NOT UNIVERSAL?—A little more light is shed upon this question by "An Insurance Clerk," who writes us, enclosing a printed list of "duties paid to Government" by London and country fire insurance offices in 1850, being the last official return, from which it appears that the Government tax the prudence and the providence of the country to the extent of no less than 1,129,592*l.* per annum! "It must be borne in mind," continues our correspondent, "that the foregoing are the parliamentary returns of the year before last, those for the past year not being yet ascertained, but we may fairly allow for rather more than the average annual increase of business in 1851, on account of insurances effected on property in the Exhibition, and at the various wharfs and warehouses, so that doubtless the gross amount will be much greater than that of the preceding year. Now, Sir, I would ask you and your many readers—Do not the above figures, for they are *facts*, speak for themselves? Do not they point to why it is fire assurance is not universal? Is it not quite obvious that, however admirable may be the principles on which assurance is based, however great the advantages it holds out, and however low the premiums required—the mass will not embrace these advantages when they are accompanied with the dead weight of such a heavy duty. How can it be expected that the multitude will assure, when they find that, for every eightcenpence they pay the assurance office, the Government makes the modest demand of three shillings—*just double?* All the reasoning in the world would not bring the poor man to think that it is anything else than a most unjust and iniquitous imposition. He admits it is right to assure, but he refuses—*on principle*—to pay 200 per cent. duty on such assurances. In the above," adds the writer, "I have not alluded to the necessity of each policy bearing the shilling stamp, though of course it should not be forgotten in estimating the revenue derived from the prudence of the country." So long as taxes are necessary, it may be all very well to tax the follies, the luxuries, or even the comforts of the country to uphold its dignity and state, but the most ruthless raid—the blackest mail—of feudal chief was not more iniquitous, impolitic, or oppressive than it is thus to mulct and to suppress the well-doing and the foresight of the people.

RATING OF PARISHES FOR THE POOR.—The iniquity of the system of rating for the relief of the poor is an old grievance, and a most indefensible evil. A memorial on the subject has been presented to the Government, and if they desire to make themselves popular with the working and middle classes, they can do nothing so likely to effect their object as to remedy this grievance. It is an old axiom, however untrue, that it is the class most nearly allied to the pauper in position and means who are most charitable to and sympathise most with those requiring charitable aid. The law of parochial rates would appear to have been based on this axiom. Whatever parish is replete with the poor, there lay it on with a heavy hand; but go lightly over the parishes of the rich. Such is the virtual admonition and instruction of the law as it stands: whereas, had the converse of this been the rule, there would have been something more like rational principle in it. The general desire, however, is simply that some equitable adjustment be made for rating all according to their means, and not merely according to their parish, and we wish the petitioners all success in the attempt.

THE BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL OF DESIGN.—According to the new arrangements recently announced, there is to be no mere making up for the award of prizes by a temporary competition amongst the students, the whole of the drawings, models, &c. executed in *the school* over a whole session being now to enter as elements in the award. In original design the choice of subject is to be left to the invention, taste, and pursuits of the students, though certain subjects of local manufacture are recommended. The designs also must be executed in the school. This school is said to be making satisfactory progress.

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